

Back to school during COVID-19: Tips for parents' well-being

With most children returning to the classroom in September for at least part of the week, there will be changes to daily routines that may present challenges for children, parents and the family as a whole.

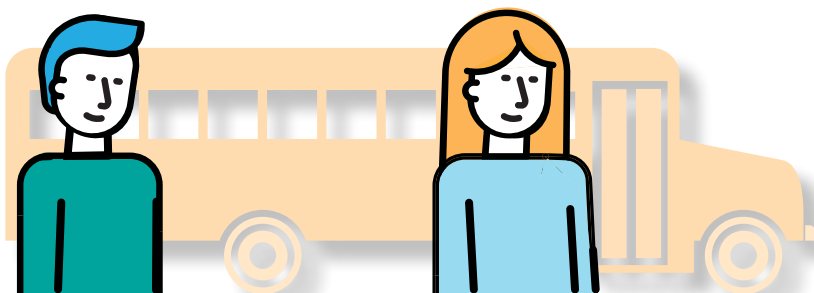
This information sheet includes some tips to help make the transition smoother, and some strategies to support you as you prepare for your children to return to school in person. (For strategies to support your children's mental health during this time, see the information sheet "[Back to school during COVID-19: Helping with children's anxiety.](#)")

Be aware of your stressors

As you anticipate your kids' transition back to school, consider your level of stress and anxiety about this change. Think too about other sources of stress affecting your family, which might include:

- reduced social support resulting from physical distancing and other pandemic-related restrictions
- loss of work or changes to work arrangements
- supporting and worrying about loved ones who have been ill
- feeling worn out after navigating virtual education in the spring and having limited activities and child care over the summer.

Being aware of the impact of these factors can help you keep them in check, and avoid unintentionally passing on your stress to your kids.



This information sheet is not intended to be a resource for people who require screening for COVID-19 or who are experiencing a mental health crisis. If you are experiencing a mental health crisis, please call 911 immediately or go to your nearest emergency department.

For more information, visit www.camh.ca/covid19

Take care of yourself by planning ahead

In order to help your child manage the transition back to school, you will need first to take care of yourself. Parents are most effective when they are successfully managing their own stress.

It can be helpful to plan ahead so you can anticipate potential stressors. You could list all the things you need to do that might cause stress, starting with the most urgent and ending with those that can wait until

later. Or you could list all the things that need to be done in a specific period of time (such as a week), and order them from most to least important.

When you are planning, build in extra time, because things often take longer to complete than we expect. Also allow for emergencies or other situations that may arise due to COVID-19 restrictions.



Return to more regular routines and better organization

The changes caused by the COVID-19 pandemic may have resulted in your usual routines getting lost. Boundaries between work time and personal time may have become blurred. Your child's return to school will create new demands on your time, so this might be a good time to get back to regular routines and reorganize your personal and family schedule. Here are some strategies to consider:

- Establish healthy boundaries, know your limits, and don't overextend yourself.

- Block out your time, avoid putting things off, and set realistic goals you know you can achieve.
- Establish work hours that allow you to rest and enjoy part of every day.
- Try to organize your work and home environments to help you perform your tasks efficiently.
- Ensure your energy is good by eating well and getting enough sleep.

Try to be aware of your thoughts

Patterns of thinking play an important role in how we respond to stress. Unhealthy ways of thinking can increase the negative effect of stressors, while healthier thoughts can help us manage stress effectively.

You can explore other practical CAMH resources to help you manage your stress and anxiety during this time, including [challenging worries and anxious thoughts](#) and [dealing with problems in a structured way](#).